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(Penguin Monarchs): The
Phoenix King

***James I (Penguin
Monarchs) : The
Phoenix King***

Part of the Penguin Monarchs series: short, fresh, expert accounts of England's rulers in a collectible format Henry VII was one of England's unlikeliest monarchs. An exile and outsider with barely a claim to the throne, his victory over Richard III at Bosworth Field seemed to many in 1485 like only the latest in the sequence

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of violent convulsions among England's nobility that would come to be known as the wars of the roses - with little to suggest that the obscure Henry would last any longer than his predecessor. To break that cycle of division, usurpation, deposition and murder, he had both to maintain a grip on power and to convince England that his rule was both rightful and effective. Here, Sean Cunningham explores how, in his ruthless,

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controlling and personal kingship, Henry VII did so; in the process founding the Tudor dynasty and, arguably, helping to lay the foundations for modern government. Sean Cunningham is a Principal Records Specialist at The National Archives. A Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, he has published widely on late medieval and early Tudor England. His books include, most recently, a historical biography

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of Henry VII.

'After my death,' George V said of his eldest son and heir, 'the boy will ruin himself within twelve months.' The forecast proved uncannily accurate. Edward VIII came to the throne in January 1936, provoked a constitutional crisis by his determination to marry the American divorcée Wallis Simpson, and abdicated in December. He was never crowned king. In choosing the woman he

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loved over his royal birthright, Edward shook the monarchy to its foundations. Given the new title 'Duke of Windsor' and essentially sent into exile, he remained a visible skeleton in the royal cupboard until his death in 1972 and he haunts the house of Windsor to this day. Drawing on unpublished material, notably correspondence with his most loyal (though much tried) supporter Winston Churchill, Piers

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**Brendon's superb
biography traces
Edward's tumultuous
public and private life
from bright young prince
to troubled sovereign,
from wartime colonial
governor to sad but
glittering expatriate.
With pace and panache,
it cuts through the
myths that still
surround this most
controversial of modern
British monarchs.
Charismatic, insatiable
and cruel, Henry VIII
was, as John Guy shows,
a king who became**

mesmerized by his own legend - and in the process destroyed and remade England. Said to be a 'pillager of the commonwealth', this most instantly recognizable of kings remains a figure of extreme contradictions: magnificent and vengeful; a devout traditionalist who oversaw a cataclysmic rupture with the church in Rome; a talented, towering figure who nevertheless could not bear to meet people's

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eyes when he talked to them. In this revealing new account, John Guy looks behind the mask into Henry's mind to explore how he understood the world and his place in it - from his isolated upbringing and the blazing glory of his accession, to his desperate quest for fame and an heir and the terrifying paranoia of his last, agonising, 54-inch-waisted years. Succeeding to the throne at the age of only nine months, Henry VI had a

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turbulent reign: he inherited a war with France and, in time, found himself at war with his own nobles. James Ross surveys this eventful life, including Henry's deposition at the hands of Edward IV and his eventual return to the throne.

A Failed King?

**The Quest for Fame
Edward IV (Penguin
Monarchs)**

The Red King

Henry VI

**William III & Mary II
(Penguin Monarchs)**

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Charles II has always been one of the most instantly recognisable British kings - both in his physical appearance, disseminated through endless portraits, prints and pub signs, and in his complicated mix of lasciviousness, cynicism and luxury. His father's execution and his own many years of exile made him a guarded, curious, unusually self-conscious ruler. He lived through some of the most striking events in the national history - from the Civil Wars to the Great Plague, from the Fire of London to the wars with the Dutch. Clare Jackson's marvellous book takes full advantage of its irrepressible subject. James's reign marked one of the very rare major breaks in England's monarchy. Already James VI of Scotland and a highly experienced ruler who had established his authority over the Scottish Kirk, he marched south on Elizabeth I's death to become James I of England and Ireland,

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uniting the British Isles for the first time and founding the Stuart dynasty which would, with several lurches, reign for over a century. Indeed his descendant still occupies the throne. A complex, curious man and great survivor, James drastically changed court life in London and presided over such major projects as the Authorized Version of the Bible and the establishment of English settlements in Virginia, Massachusetts, Gujarat and the Caribbean. Although he failed to unite England and Scotland, he insisted that ambassadors acknowledge him as King of Great Britain and that vessels from both countries display a version of the current Union Flag. He was often accused of being too informal and insufficiently regal - but when his son, Charles I, decided to redress these criticisms in his own reign he was destroyed. How much of the roots of this disaster were to be found in James's reign

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is one of the many problems dramatized in Thomas Cogswell's brilliant and highly entertaining new book.

The formation of England occurred against the odds: an island divided into rival kingdoms, under savage assault from Viking hordes. But, after King Alfred ensured the survival of Wessex and his son Edward expanded it, his grandson Athelstan inherited the rule of both Mercia and Wessex, conquered Northumbria and was hailed as *Rex totius Britanniae*: 'King of the whole of Britain'. Tom Holland recounts this extraordinary story with relish and drama, transporting us back to a time of omens, raven harbingers and blood-red battlefields. As well as giving form to the figure of Athelstan - devout, shrewd, all too aware of the precarious nature of his power, especially in the north - he introduces the great figures of the age, including Alfred and his daughter

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Aethelflaed, 'Lady of the Mercians', who brought Athelstan up at the Mercian court. Making sense of the family rivalries and fractious conflicts of the Anglo-Saxon rulers, Holland shows us how a royal dynasty rescued their kingdom from near-oblivion and fashioned a nation that endures to this day.

George I was not the most charismatic of the Hanoverian monarchs to have reigned in England but he was probably the most important. He was certainly the luckiest. Born the youngest son of a landless German duke, he was taken by repeated strokes of good fortune to become, first the ruler of a major state in the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation and then the sovereign of three kingdoms (England, Ireland and Scotland). Tim Blanning's incisive short biography examines George's life and career as a German prince, and as King. Fifty-four years old

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when he arrived in London in 1714, he was a battle-hardened veteran, who put his long experience and deep knowledge of international affairs to good use in promoting the interests of both Hanover and Great Britain. When he died, his legacy was order and prosperity at home and power and prestige abroad.

Disagreeable he may have been to many, but he was also tough, determined and effective, at a time when other European thrones had started to crumble.

The Daughter of Time

King in Exile

James II (Penguin Monarchs)

Henry I (Penguin Monarchs)

James I

Partners in Revolution

Edward VIII (Penguin Monarchs)

**King of Britain for sixty years
and the last king of what
would become the United**

States, George III inspired both hatred and loyalty and is now best known for two reasons: as a villainous tyrant for America's Founding Fathers, and for his madness, both of which have been portrayed on stage and screen. In this concise and penetrating biography, Jeremy Black turns away from the image-making and back to the archives, and instead locates George's life within his age: as a king who faced the loss of key colonies, rebellion in Ireland, insurrection in London, constitutional crisis in Britain and an existential threat from Revolutionary France as part of modern Britain's longest period of

war. Black shows how George III rose to these challenges with fortitude and helped settle parliamentary monarchy as an effective governmental system, eventually becoming the most popular monarch for well over a century. He also shows us a talented and curious individual, committed to music, art, architecture and science, who took the duties of monarchy seriously, from reviewing death penalties to trying to control his often wayward children even as his own mental health failed, and became Britain's longest reigning king. Although he styled himself 'His Highness', adopted the

court ritual of his royal predecessors, and lived in the former royal palaces of Whitehall and Hampton Court, Oliver Cromwell was not a king - in spite of the best efforts of his supporters to crown him. Yet, as David Horspool shows in this illuminating new portrait of England's Lord Protector, Cromwell, the Puritan son of Cambridgeshire gentry, wielded such influence that it would be a pretence to say that power really lay with the collective. The years of Cromwell's rise to power, shaped by a decade-long civil war, saw a sustained attempt at the collective government of England; the first attempts

at a real Union of Britain; the beginnings of empire; a radically new solution to the idea of a national religion; atrocities in Ireland; and the readmission to England of the Jews, a people officially banned for over three and a half centuries. At the end of it, Oliver Cromwell had emerged as the country's sole ruler: to his enemies, and probably to most of his countrymen, his legacy looked as likely to last as that of the Stuart dynasty he had replaced.

King John ruled England for seventeen and a half years, yet his entire reign is usually reduced to one image: of the villainous monarch

outmanoeuvred by rebellious barons into agreeing to Magna Carta at Runnymede in 1215. Ever since, John has come to be seen as an archetypal tyrant. But how evil was he? In this perceptive short account, Nicholas Vincent unpicks John's life through his deeds and his personality. The youngest of four brothers, overlooked and given a distinctly unroyal name, John seemed doomed to failure. As king, he was reputedly cruel and treacherous, pursuing his own interests at the expense of his country, losing the continental empire bequeathed to him by his father Henry and his brother

Richard and eventually plunging England into civil war. Only his lordship of Ireland showed some success. Yet, as this fascinating biography asks, were his crimes necessarily greater than those of his ancestors - or was he judged more harshly because, ultimately, he failed as a warlord?

**A BOOK OF THE YEAR 2021,
AS CHOSEN BY THE TIMES,
NEW STATESMAN AND
TIMES LITERARY
SUPPLEMENT 'A big
historical advance. Ours, it
turns out, is a very un-insular
"Island Story". And its 17th-
century chapter will never
look quite the same again'
John Adamson, Sunday Times**

A ground-breaking portrait of the most turbulent century in English history Among foreign observers, seventeenth-century England was known as 'Devil-Land': a diabolical country of fallen angels, torn apart by seditious rebellion, religious extremism and royal collapse. Clare Jackson's dazzling, original account of English history's most turbulent and radical era tells the story of a nation in a state of near continual crisis. As an unmarried heretic with no heir, Elizabeth I was regarded with horror by Catholic Europe, while her Stuart successors, James I and Charles I, were seen as impecunious and

incompetent, unable to manage their three kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland. The traumatic civil wars, regicide and a republican Commonwealth were followed by the floundering, foreign-leaning rule of Charles II and his brother, James II, before William of Orange invaded England with a Dutch army and a new order was imposed. Devil-Land reveals England as, in many ways, a 'failed state': endemically unstable and rocked by devastating events from the Gunpowder Plot to the Great Fire of London. Catastrophe nevertheless bred creativity, and Jackson makes brilliant

use of eyewitness accounts - many penned by stupefied foreigners - to dramatize her great story. Starting on the eve of the Spanish Armada's descent in 1588 and concluding with a not-so 'Glorious Revolution' a hundred years later, Devil-Land is a spectacular reinterpretation of England's vexed and enthralling past. William I (Penguin Monarchs) Devil-Land

**The King's Assassin
Edward I (Penguin Monarchs)
Edward the Confessor
(Penguin Monarchs)
Not Just a British Monarch
Richard III (Penguin Monarchs)**

Henry VI, son of the all-conquering

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Henry V, was one of the least able and least successful of English kings. His long reign, which started when he was only nine months old, ended in catastrophe, with the loss of England's territories in France and a bankrupt England's long decline into civil war- the wars of the Roses. Yet, failure though Henry undoubtedly was, he remains an enigma. Was he always, as he became in the last disastrous years of his rule, a holy fool, simple-minded to the point of insanity and prey to the ambitions of others? Or was he more active and, as some have suggested, actively malign? In this groundbreaking new portrait, James Ross shows a king whose priorities diverged sharply from what England expected of its monarchs,

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and whose fitful engagement with government was directly, though not solely, responsible for the disasters that engulfed the kingdom during his reign.

Part of the Penguin Monarchs series: short, fresh, expert accounts of England's rulers in a collectible format. The cultural richness of the reign of Edward the Confessor marks the high point of Anglo-Saxon England. The saintly Edward has become one of the legendary figures in English. James Campbell's brilliant little book is the most insightful look at his personality and reign yet published.

On Christmas Day 1066, William, duke of Normandy was crowned in Westminster, the first Norman king of

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England. It was a disaster: soldiers outside, thinking shouts of acclamation were treachery, torched the surrounding buildings. To later chroniclers, it was an omen of the catastrophes to come. During the reign of William the Conqueror, England experienced greater and more seismic change than at any point before or since. Marc Morris's concise and gripping biography sifts through the sources of the time to give a fresh view of the man who changed England more than any other, as old ruling elites were swept away, enemies at home and abroad (including those in his closest family) were crushed, swathes of the country were devastated and the map of the nation itself was redrawn, giving greater

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power than ever to the king. When, towards the end of his reign, William undertook a great survey of his new lands, his subjects compared it to the last judgement of God, the Domesday Book. England had been transformed forever.

William III (1689-1702) & Mary II (1689-94) (Britain's only ever 'joint monarchs') changed the course of the entire country's history, coming to power through a coup (which involved Mary betraying her own father), reestablishing parliament on a new footing and, through committing Britain to fighting France, initiating an immensely long period of warfare and colonial expansion. Jonathan Keates' wonderful book makes both monarchs vivid, the cold, shrewd

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'Dutch' William and the shortlived Mary, whose life and death inspired Purcell to write some of his greatest music.

The Fatal Affair of George Villiers and James I

Anne

England Under Siege, 1588-1688

Stephen (Penguin Monarchs)

A New King Arthur?

Last Queen of England

Cnut (Penguin Monarchs)

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III at Bosworth Field seemed to many in 1485 only the latest in the sequence of violent convulsions among England's nobility that would come to be known as the Wars of the Roses - with little to suggest that the obscure Henry would last any longer than his predecessor. To break the cycle of division, usurpation, deposition and murder, he had both to maintain a grip on power and to convince England that his rule was both rightful and effective. Here, Sean Cunningham explores how, in his ruthless and controlling kingship, Henry VII did so, in the process founding the Tudor dynasty.

John Callow's book reassesses James II's strategy for dealing with his

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downfall and exile after his defeat at the Battle of the Boyne in July 1690, presenting a portrait of a man who planned for himself great political rewards and popular acclaim.

SPECTATOR AND TELEGRAPH BOOKS OF THE YEAR 2015 *The short, action-packed reign of James II (1685-88) is generally seen as one of the most catastrophic in British history. James managed, despite having access to tremendous reserves of good will and deference, to so alienate his supporters that he had to flee for his life. And yet, most of that life was spent not as king but first as heir to Charles II, as Duke of York (after whom New York is named) and then in the last part of his life as*

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the first Jacobite 'Pretender', starting a problem that would haunt Britain's rulers for generations.

In 1461 Edward earl of March, an able, handsome, and charming eighteen-year old, usurped the English throne from his feeble Lancastrian predecessor Henry VI. Ten years on, following outbreaks of civil conflict that culminated in him losing, then regaining the crown, he had finally secured his kingdom. The years that followed witnessed a period of rule that has been described as a golden age: a time of peace and economic and industrial expansion, which saw the establishment of a style of monarchy that the Tudors would later develop. Yet, argues A. J. Pollard,

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Edward, who was drawn to a life of sexual and epicurean excess, was a man of limited vision, his reign remaining to the very end the narrow rule of a victorious faction in civil war. Ultimately, his failure was dynastic: barely two months after his death in April 1483, the throne was usurped by Edward's youngest brother, Richard III.

The Lucky King

James II, 1685-1688

Charles II (Penguin Monarchs)

The North Sea King

The Reign of Anarchy

James II

George III (Penguin Monarchs)

The elder daughter of
Henry VIII, Mary I

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(1553-58) became England's ruler on the unexpected death of her brother Edward VI. Her short reign is one of the great potential turning points in the country's history. As a convinced Catholic and the wife of Philip II, king of Spain and the most powerful of all European monarchs, Mary could have completely changed her country's orbit, making it a province of the Habsburg Empire and obedient again to Rome. These

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extraordinary possibilities are fully dramatized in John Edward's superb short biography. The real Mary I has almost disappeared under the great mass of Protestant propaganda that buried her reputation during her younger sister, Elizabeth I's reign. But what if she had succeeded? The brief, eventful reign of James II was one of the most catastrophic in British history. Powerful and

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popular when he came to the throne, James managed, despite great reserves of good will and deference, to so alienate his supporters that he had to flee the country. And yet, as David Womersley's lucid account shows, most of James's life was spent not as king but first as Duke of York (after whom New York is named) and later, after attempting to convert his realm to Catholicism, in exile, thereby creating the spectre of a Jacobite

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restoration that would haunt the monarchy for generations. Ultimately, James II was a man whose blindness to subtlety and lack of understanding of political reality brought about his downfall.

Part of the Penguin Monarchs series: short, fresh, expert accounts of England's rulers in a collectible format In the popular imagination, as in her portraits, Elizabeth I is the image of monarchical power.

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The Virgin Queen ruled over a Golden Age: the Spanish Armada was defeated and England's enemies scattered; English explorers reached almost to the ends of the earth; a new Church of England rose from the ashes of past conflict, and the English Renaissance bloomed in the genius of Shakespeare, Spenser and Sidney. But the image is also armour. In this illuminating new account of Elizabeth's reign, Helen Castor shows how

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England's iconic queen was shaped by profound and enduring insecurity—an insecurity which was both a matter of practical political reality and personal psychology. From her precarious upbringing at the whim of a brutal, capricious father and her perilous accession after his death, to the religious division that marred her state and the failure to marry that threatened her line, Elizabeth lived under constant threat. But,

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facing down her enemies with a compellingly inscrutable public persona, the last and greatest of the Tudor monarchs would become a timeless, fearless queen.

No English king has so divided opinion, both during his reign and in the centuries since, more than Richard III. He was loathed in his own time for the never-confirmed murder of his young nephews, the Princes in the Tower, and died fighting his

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own subjects on the battlefield. This is the vision of Richard we have inherited from Shakespeare. Equally, he inspired great loyalty in his followers. In this enlightening, even-handed study, Rosemary Horrox builds a complex picture of a king who by any standard failed as a monarch. He was killed after only two years on the throne, without an heir, and brought such a decisive end to the House of York that Henry Tudor was able to seize

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the throne, despite his extremely tenuous claim. Whether Richard was undone by his own fierce ambitions, or by the legacy of a Yorkist dynasty which was already profoundly dysfunctional, the end result was the same: Richard III destroyed the very dynasty that he had spent his life so passionately defending. The Holy King (Penguin Monarchs)
Henry VII (Penguin Monarchs)
England's Protector

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Madness and Majesty

The Star King

A Heroic Failure

An Abbreviated Life

William II (1087-1100), or William Rufus, will always be most famous for his death: killed by an arrow while out hunting, perhaps through accident or perhaps murder. But, as John Gillingham makes clear in this elegant book, as the son and successor to William the Conqueror it was William Rufus who had to establish permanent Norman rule. A ruthless, irascible man, he frequently argued acrimoniously with his older brother Robert over their father's inheritance - but he also handed out effective justice,

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leaving as his legacy one of the most extraordinary of all medieval buildings, Westminster Hall.

Edward III lived through bloody and turbulent times. His father was deposed by his mother and her lover when he was still a teenager; a third of England's population was killed by the Black Death midway through his reign; and the intractable Hundred Years War with France began under his leadership. Yet Edward managed to rule England for fifty years, and was viewed as a paragon of kingship in the eyes of both his contemporaries and later generations. Venerated as the victor of Sluys and Crécy and the founder of the Order of the Garter, he was

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regarded with awe even by his enemies. But he lived too long, and was ultimately condemned to see thirty years of conquests reversed in less than five. In this gripping new account of Edward III's rise and fall, Jonathan Sumption introduces us to a fêted king who ended his life a heroic failure.

The short, action-packed reign of James II (1685-88) is generally seen as one of the most catastrophic in British history. James managed, despite having access to tremendous reserves of good will and deference, to so alienate his supporters that he had to flee for his life. And yet, most of that life was spent not as king but first as heir to Charles II, as Duke of

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reign he was destroyed. How much of the roots of this disaster were to be found in James's reign is one of the many problems dramatized in Thomas Cogswell's brilliant and highly entertaining new book.

An Evil King?

Henry VIII (Penguin Monarchs)

George II (Penguin Monarchs)

Oliver Cromwell (Penguin Monarchs)

A Study in Insecurity

Edward the Confessor

The Last Catholic King

Few kings have been more savagely caricatured or grossly misunderstood than England's first Stuart. Yet, as this new biography

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demonstrates, the modern tendency to downplay his defects and minimise the long-term consequences of his reign has gone too far. In spite of genuine idealism and flashes of considerable resourcefulness, James I remains a perplexing figure – a uniquely curious ruler, shot through with glaring inconsistencies. His vices and foibles not only undermined his high hopes for healing and renewal after Elizabeth I's troubled last years, but also entrenched political and religious tensions that eventually consumed his

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successor. A flawed, if well-meaning, foreigner in a rapidly changing and divided kingdom, his passionate commitment to time-honoured principles of government would, ironically, prove his undoing, as England edged unconsciously towards a crossroads and the shadow of the Thirty Years War descended upon Europe. Known as 'the anarchy', the reign of Stephen (1135-1141) saw England plunged into a civil war that illuminated the fatal flaw in the powerful Norman monarchy, that without clear rules ordering

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succession, conflict between members of William the Conqueror's family were inevitable. But there was another problem, too: Stephen himself. With the nobility of England and Normandy anxious about the prospect of a world without the tough love of the old king Henry I, Stephen styled himself a political panacea, promising strength without oppression. As external threats and internal resistance to his rule accumulated, it was a promise he was unable to keep. Unable to transcend his flawed claim to the throne, and to make the

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transition from nobleman to king, Stephen's actions betrayed uneasiness in his role, his royal voice never quite ringing true. The resulting violence that spread throughout England was not, or not only, the work of bloodthirsty men on the make. As Watkins shows in this resonant new portrait, it arose because great men struggled to navigate a new and turbulent kind of politics that arose when the king was in eclipse.

From the celebrated historian and author of *Europe: A History*, a new life of George II

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George II, King of Great Britain and Ireland and Elector of Hanover, came to Britain for the first time when he was thirty-one. He had a terrible relationship with his father, George I, which was later paralleled by his relationship to his own son. He was short-tempered and uncultivated, but in his twenty-three-year reign he presided over a great flourishing in his adoptive country - economic, military and cultural - all described with characteristic wit and elegance by Norman Davies. (George II so admired the Hallelujah chorus in Handel's

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Messiah that he stood while it was being performed - as modern audiences still do.)

Much of his attention remained in Hanover and on continental politics, as a result of which he was the last British monarch to lead his troops into battle, at Dettingen in 1744.

Cnut, or Canute, is one of the great 'what ifs' of English history. The Dane who became King of England after a long period of Viking attacks and settlement, his reign could have permanently shifted eleventh-century England's rule to Scandinavia. Stretching

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his authority across the North Sea to become king of Denmark and Norway, and with close links to Ireland and an overlordship of Scotland, this formidable figure created a Viking Empire at least as plausible as the Anglo-Norman Empire that would emerge in 1066. Ryan Lavelle's illuminating book cuts through myths and misconceptions to explore this fascinating and powerful man in detail. Cnut is most popularly known now for the story of the king who tried to command the waves, relegated to a bit part in the medieval story, but as this

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biography shows, he was a conqueror, political player, law maker and empire builder on the grandest scale, one whose reign tells us much about the contingent nature of history.

Scotland's King of England

The Father of His People

George I (Penguin Monarchs)

The Failed King

The Uncrowned King

The Sainted King

The Phoenix King

The youngest of William the

Conqueror's sons, Henry I (1100-35)

was never meant to be king, but he was destined to become one of the greatest of all medieval monarchs, both through his own ruthlessness and intelligence

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and through the dynastic legacy of his daughter Matilda, who began the Plantagenet line that would rule England until 1485. A self-consciously diligent and thoughtful king, his rule was looked back on as the real post-invasion re-founding of England as a new realm, integrated into the continent, wealthy and stable. Edmund King's wonderful portrait of Henry shows him as a strikingly charismatic and thoughtful man. His life was dogged by a single great disaster, the death of his teenage heir William in the White Ship disaster. Despite astonishing numbers of illegitimate sons, Henry was now left with only a daughter. This fact would shape the rest of the 12th century and beyond. James I (Penguin Monarchs)The

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The rise of George Villiers from minor gentry to royal power seemed to defy gravity. Becoming gentleman of the royal bedchamber in 1615, the young gallant enraptured James, Britain's first Stuart king, royal adoration reaching such an intensity that the king declared he wanted the courtier to become his 'wife'. For a decade, Villiers was at the king's side – at court, on state occasions and in bed, right up to James's death in March 1625. Almost immediately, Villiers' many enemies accused him of poisoning the king. A parliamentary investigation was launched, and scurrilous pamphlets and ballads circulated London's streets. But the charges came to nothing, and were

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*relegated to a historical footnote. Now, new historical scholarship suggests that a deadly combination of hubris and vulnerability did indeed drive Villiers to kill the man who made him. It may have been by accident – the application of a quack remedy while the king was weakened by a malarial attack. But there is compelling evidence that Villiers, overcome by ambition and frustrated by James’s passive approach to government, poisoned him. In *The King’s Assassin*, acclaimed author Benjamin Woolley examines this remarkable, even tragic story. Combining vivid characterization and a strong narrative with historical scholarship and forensic investigation, Woolley tells the story of King James’s death, and of the*

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captivating figure at its centre. What emerges is a compelling portrait of a royal favourite whose charisma overwhelmed those around him and, ultimately, himself.

James II (1633–1701) lacked the charisma of his father, Charles I, but shared his tendency to dismiss the views of others when they differed from his own. Failing to understand his subjects, James was also misunderstood by them. In this highly-regarded biography, John Miller reassesses James II and his reign, drawing on a wide array of primary sources from France, Italy, and Ireland as well as England. Miller argues that the king had many laudable attributes--he was brave, loyal, honorable, and hard-working, and he

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was at least as benevolent toward his people as his father had been. Yet James's conversion to Catholicism fueled the distrust of his Protestant subjects who placed the worst possible construction on his actions and statements. Although James came to see the securing of religious freedom for Catholics in the wider context of freedom for all religious minorities, his people naturally doubted the sincerity of his commitment to toleration. The book explores James's relations with the state and society, focusing on the political, diplomatic, and religious issues that shaped his reign. Miller discusses the human failings, the gulf of understanding between the king and his subjects, and the sheer bad luck that led to James's downfall. He also

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considers the reasons for James's lack of interest in recovering his kingdom after his flight to France in 1688. This revised edition of the book includes a substantial new foreword assessing recent work on the reign. "This is a first-class essay in historical biography. . . . It must displace all previous lives of James II."—J. P. Kenyon, Observer

Treason and Trust

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Elizabeth I (Penguin Monarchs)

The Summer King

James I (Penguin Monarchs)

Edward III (Penguin Monarchs)

William II (Penguin Monarchs)

**Edward I (1272–1307) is
one of the most
commanding of all**

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English rulers. He fought in southwest France, in Wales, In Scotland and in northern France, he ruled with ruthlessness and confidence, undoing the chaotic failure of his father, Henry III's reign. He reshaped England's legal system and came close to bringing the whole island of Great Britain under his rule. He promoted the idea of himself as the new King Arthur, his Round Table still hanging in

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Winchester Castle to this day. His greatest monuments are the extraordinary castles--Caernarfon, Beaumaris, Harlech and Conwy--built to ensure his rule of Wales and some of the largest of all medieval buildings. Andy King's brilliant short biography brings to life a strange, complex man whose triumphs raise all kinds of questions about the nature of kingship - how could someone who established so many key

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elements in England's
unique legal and
parliamentary system
also have been such a
harsh, militarily brutal
warrior?

A major new title in the
Penguin Monarchs series
In his fascinating new
book in the Penguin
Monarchs series, Richard
Abels examines the long
and troubled reign of
Aethelred II the
'Unraed', the 'Ill-
Advised'. It is
characteristic of
Aethelred's reign that
its greatest surviving

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work of literature, the poem *The Battle of Maldon*, should be a record of heroic defeat. Perhaps no ruler could have stemmed the encroachment of wave upon wave of Viking raiders, but Aethelred will always be associated with that failure. Richard Abels is Professor Emeritus at the United States Naval Academy. He is the author of *Alfred the Great: War, Kingship and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England and Lordship and*

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Military Obligation in Anglo-Saxon England. He is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. The tragedy of Charles I dominates one of the most strange and painful periods in British history as the whole island tore itself apart over a deadly, entangled series of religious and political disputes. In Mark Kishlansky's brilliant account it is never in doubt that Charles created his own catastrophe, but he was nonetheless opposed by

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men with far fewer
scruples and less
consistency who for
often quite
contradictory reasons
conspired to destroy
him. This is a
remarkable portrait of
one of the most
talented, thoughtful,
loyal, moral,
artistically alert and
yet, somehow, disastrous
of all this country's
rulers.

Edward the Confessor,
the last great king of
Anglo-Saxon England,
canonized nearly 100

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years after his death, is in part a figure of myths created in the late middle ages. In this revealing portrait of England's royal saint, David Woodman traces the course of Edward's twenty-four-year-long reign through the lens of contemporary sources, from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and the *Vita Edwardi Regis* to the Bayeux Tapestry, to separate myth from history and uncover the complex politics of his life. He shows Edward to

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be a shrewd politician who, having endured a long period of exile from England in his youth, ascended the throne in 1042 and came to control a highly sophisticated and powerful administration. The twists and turns of Edward's reign are generally seen as a prelude to the Norman Conquest in 1066. Woodman explains clearly how events unfolded and personalities interacted but, unlike many, he shows a capable and

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impressive king at the
centre of them.

Henry VI, 1422-1461

John (Penguin Monarchs)

England's Conqueror

Mary I (Penguin
Monarchs)

Aethelred the Unready
(Penguin Monarchs)

The Making of England

Athelstan (Penguin
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